

Ultimately, we are being maneuvered into a position, are you going to shut down the Government by refusing to enact a continuing resolution or are you going to accept that and accept it at last year's levels, which would totally not have our country prepared for the defense of this homeland? That does not make sense to this Senator, and that is not in the interest of my State particularly since it seems as if whatever happens often happens first in Florida.

Anthrax happened. We even had a kid flying a plane into a tall building. We have the threats in the 14 deepwater ports in Florida of what kind of cargo could come in that would never be inspected. It could not even come in on a commercial cargo ship. It could come in on a pleasure craft. So many of the ports of this Nation have deepwater access all the way up to a highly urbanized downtown area. There is the opportunity for mischief by those who want to do damage to the United States.

I urge upon my colleagues that we be very careful as we approach these decisions on the appropriations bills, and on the concurrent decisions on tax policy, that we do what is in the interest of the defense of this country and also in the interest of the stimulus of getting this sick economy moving again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need to truly stimulate our economy and create jobs and how we can do that in a way that is fair for everyone, that puts dollars back in the pockets of middle-class Americans who we know literally drive the economic engine by buying cars, homes, clothes for their children, groceries, and all of the other purchases that keep our economy going.

I have grave concerns about the so-called economic proposal that has come from the President. In fact, it does not meet the definition of that term, and I have great concern because it does not put the majority of money back in the pockets of people who drive the economic engine.

We can come together on issues such as eliminating the marriage tax penalty, increasing the child credit, and helping small businesses, which by the way are the majority of new jobs being created today. The majority of new jobs is coming from small businesses. We need to be focusing on ways to help small businesses pay for their health care and to have the kinds of incentives they need to invest back in their companies so they will grow.

When we look at the proposal the President has brought forward, if we were to come together, we could easily pass relief as it relates to the marriage tax penalty, with bipartisan support. We could easily pass increases in the child tax credit on a bipartisan basis. We could easily support small business in ways that we can provide tax relief and other kinds of support.

The problem is two-thirds of the President's plan, the vast majority, does not do any of that. Two-thirds of the plan is focused on the very top income earners in the United States who already have one, two, or three homes, multiple cars, and who are not necessarily going to be spending these dollars back into the economy, at the expense of everyone else.

When we look at what this proposal from the White House means to Americans, taxpayers with incomes of over \$1 million would get back an average of \$88,873, almost \$89,000 coming back to them. The majority of taxpayers, the typical middle-class taxpayer in the United States of America, would get \$265. That is a huge disparity.

Some say, well, if we talk about the differences, if we talk about the fact that the majority goes to those at the very top, we are engaged in class warfare. With all due respect, that is a bunch of baloney. We are talking about how we can fairly put money into people's pockets. We want to make sure the majority of the middle-income taxpayers, the ones who are keeping the engine going, have tax relief and get dollars back in their pockets. Of course, that happens in a variety of ways. Tax relief is one. This kind of a difference is not fair. It is simply not fair.

There is another way to make sure we have money in people's pockets. That is to make sure we are not exploding the national debt and causing interest rates to rise. There is another kind of tax on people we went through in the 1980s and the 1990s. That is high interest rates. When citizens buy an automobile—coming from Michigan, I am very interested in people buying a lot of automobiles, a lot of domestically made, American-made automobiles; we want people to be able to afford that—high interest rates affect your ability to buy that new car. High interest rates affect your ability to buy your new home, or to be able to afford to send your children to college. Interest rates which directly relate to the national debt affect how much money goes in people's pockets.

This proposal of the President is not fair on its face. We are looking at the top .2 percent, 226,000 millionaires, receive more than half, almost two-thirds of all of the tax cuts being imposed; 68 percent of the people receive \$15 billion; and .2 percent of the taxpayers get \$20 billion. It is not fair on its face. If you add in the fact this is a proposal that will greatly increase the national debt on the back end, what we are doing is saddling these middle-class taxpayers and our baby boomers—of which I am one—and our children and grandchildren with more debt. We will increase interest rates and take more money out of people's pockets.

Mr. REID. If I could ask my friend from Michigan to withhold. The majority leader is on the floor with important business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will take this opportunity to update Members as to where we are in the process. We have been working in very good faith—I might add, frustrating in many ways, but very good faith—making progress over the last 8 or 9 days. That is the committee resolution. As I pointed out earlier this morning and last night, in order to get on with the Nation's business, it is important to organize our committees so Members can be on committees. On the Republican side, we began this process, assigning Republican Members to their various committee assignments. I assume, that being very basic, the other side has done that as well.

The American people do want Congress to continue to tackle the challenges we face today as a country, homeland security, the issues surrounding the spending bills and appropriations bills from the last Congress.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. I ask that morning business be closed, and I now send a resolution to the desk which would make majority party committee appointments.

Mr. REID. I have no objection to morning business being closed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. Morning business is now closed.

MAKING MAJORITY PARTY APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 18) making majority party appointments to certain Senate committees for the 108th Congress.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I hope we can agree to this resolution in short order. Following its approval, we will proceed to the minority committee appointments, which will allow the Senate to begin the real work.

Mr. REID. On behalf of the minority leader, and I spoke to him just before coming out here, the Democratic leader and I have spoken. He feels, as does the majority leader, that we need to try to move this organizing resolution along, and both leaders have worked and assigned staff to work on it. It is moving along. We hope it can be accomplished very quickly. We are both going to go now to our weekly party conferences and this will be discussed at length with other important matters before the Senate.

I, on behalf of the Democratic Senate, understand the frustration of the majority leader. We had the same problem a year and a half or so ago. It took a while to resolve that almost 6 weeks. I certainly hope this does not take that long. I appreciate the manner and tone